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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all

Statement submitted by Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

1. Successful social development would seem to imply the growth of individuals and groups to enable them to live productive lives, and fulfil their total human potential. Crime and violence would seem to be the opposite. Crime and violence have many causes, but we suggest that some of the common root causes are the absence or failures in social development. We suggest, further, that inadequate economic development likewise may have roots in the absence or failures in social development. Moreover, as most incarcerated persons are eventually released back into society, failure to remedy the root causes of these deficiencies in social development during incarceration propagates crime and violence still further.

Who are the prisoners?

2. It is instructive to examine the prisons of the world and their inhabitants. Who are the incarcerated? A high percentage of persons incarcerated are the poor, those with the least education, with the least job skills, and coming from marginalized racial and ethnic minority communities. Many of them have also been afflicted with family dysfunction, learning disabilities, mental or psychological illness, addiction, or other social handicaps. These are large captive populations, running into many millions of persons, stemming from a dominant philosophy of punishment and repression of violators of laws. Counting the costs of police, courts, detention facilities, and after-effects, the financial burden to the world runs into hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Are we on the right track? Are we addressing root causes?

Examples of rehabilitation programmes

3. Our prisons can be promoters of either anti-social development or restorative social development. First let's consider the latter. Economic self-sufficiency of those released from prison is usually an obvious prerequisite to reducing crime and subsequent government expense. Central to the dignity of every human person is engagement in work that reinforces that dignity and makes it possible for the worker to engage with others in shaping the life of the community. Therefore, job-oriented training is a first foundation of any solution to this problem. Corrective social development often must also include alcohol or drug treatment, remedial education, life skills development, and physical, psychological, or mental health treatments or counselling. The needs of the incarcerated for restorative approaches are too often ignored. Nevertheless, some very good rehabilitation and re-entry programmes exist in many countries, as illustrated in the following examples.

4. One Central American country provides its incarcerated persons with a life skills training programme, as well as agriculture classes, computer programming classes and parenting skills classes. A South American country supports volunteers teaching inmates accounting and how to start small businesses. In another country, after learning how to read and write, incarcerated persons are given at least 40 hours of instruction in basic management, total quality management, and other business techniques. In a North American country, a community-based organization provides formerly incarcerated persons with alcohol and drug treatment services, halfway houses and supportive living, vocational job training in culinary arts, motel and restaurant operations, building maintenance and computer applications, job placement, job retention and job coaching services. These and many other examples of rehabilitation programmes in prisons can and should be replicated. Education, job training, addiction treatment, and health caring are proven methods for reducing recidivism, and thus improving everyone's quality of life.

Examples of abuses

5. On the other hand, there are very many examples of abuse and lack of social development in criminal justice systems. In one South American country, for example, major problems include insufficient food, overcrowding, the lack of medical services, and a lack of sanitation and hygienic facilities. In a North American country, the HIV/AIDS rate is six times higher in State and federal prisons than it is in the general population, and the hepatitis infection rate is 9-10 times higher in the prison population than that of the general public.

In many prisons, as crowding has increased, so has prison violence - with physical abuse, gang domination, rapes, and riots increasingly common. Narcotics trafficking, prostitution rings, and other criminal enterprises are prevalent in too many prisons.

Clearly, the problems are great, but so are the opportunities for further development of these large captive populations.

A new era of promise

6. Overemphasis on a primarily punishment-and-suppression policy, with too little spent on social and economic development, results in over-incarceration, delayed judicial processing, over-crowding, a high recidivism rate with further crime and violence, and increasing costs amounting to hundreds of billions of misspent dollars each year.

It need not be so. There is widespread awareness that alternative, more restorative approaches can yield better results at lower cost.

Some specific steps to restructure criminal justice towards a more restorative justice, aimed at social and economic development, include the following:

7. Recommendations

1. Promote social and economic development approaches to the seedbeds of crime and violence in neighbourhoods with very high unemployment, dilapidated housing, poor health services, poor schools, broken families, and a prevalence of addiction.

2. Expand alternatives to incarceration, for both punishment and healing, especially for addicted and mentally ill persons. Use incarceration only when necessary. Avoid excessive sentences.

3. Invest in rehabilitation programmes that develop marketable job skills. Emphasize employability for decent work and a decent living.

4. Prevent overcrowding of prisons; and provide standard sanitary facilities in all correctional institutions.

5. Ensure humane treatment of all incarcerated persons, in keeping with the dignity of every human person.

6. Provide timely medical service for the incarcerated; test for and treat infectious diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and hepatitis.

7. Whenever appropriate, provide quality treatment for drug addiction, instead of incarceration. Support both in-prison and post-prison treatment for alcohol and drug addictions.

8. Ensure proper treatment or counselling for those who are mentally or psychologically ill.

9. Provide rehabilitation and re-entry planning for each individual, beginning during the first days of incarceration. Fund programmes to fulfil those plans, to enable restorative services both during incarceration and after release.

10. Help incarcerated persons to maintain contact with family and friends through supportive policies concerning visitation, mail and telephones.

In this way, crime and violence can be addressed. The issue is what works best and where the best investment is. We believe that an increased blend of social and economic development - before, during, and after incarceration, instead of only punishment and repression measures - can better restore millions of persons to more productive lives and save billions of dollars each year in the process.

Note:

Statement endorsed and supported by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Dominican Leadership Conference and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all

Statement submitted by Kolping International Society and International Association of Charities, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

1. This paper is the product of a dialogue between member unions of the German Federation of Unions (DGB) and a working group of the German Commission for Justice and Peace, among them AIC and Kolping International, both NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The following text is an excerpt.

2. Human work encompasses a large number of aspects which cannot be reduced simply to gaining income and economic security, as fundamental and indispensable as this function of work is today. Both Christian social teaching and the trade union movement have always stressed the comprehensive significance of work for the individual and the human community, and have construed concrete political demands from this conviction.

3. Work promotes people's creativity, their flexibility and their openness; they remain intellectually and physically mobile. In this sense, work makes a significant contribution to a person's self-realization. Furthermore, participation in the division of tasks within society is a central key to social participation. Nonetheless, however, family work and voluntary and civic commitment have always taken on considerable significance in the understanding of both Christians and of the trade unions. Human work in all its manifestations is vital to conserving and respecting people's dignity, and it is an expression of social life.

4. For this reason, work is different in qualitative terms from the production factor "capital" (and the production factor "natural resources"). Nonetheless, work is frequently regarded as merely a production and cost factor which is moved around like a number at will without taking account of the comprehensive nature of work and its existential meaning.

5. This runs counter to our shared understanding of work as having been learned by people in the various spiritual and value-orientated traditions and shaped according to social rules in their respective cultures. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has recognized that an internationally binding joint foundation for this understanding must be found. A distinction is made here between the "right to work" and "rights at work"; these are however brought together to form the concept of decent work because they are so closely linked.

6. People who work pass through several phases of life, and hence of employment. The manifestation assumed by work cannot always be identical in these phases, but must in each instance accommodate a variety of individual, biographical, social and economic requirements. This benefits not only the individual, but also society and industry, the older, younger and following generations as well as those in between. A good system of basic and further training guarantees the success of entrepreneurial activity and the positive development of a pluralist democracy. A modern family policy supporting child-raising, stable social security systems and the promotion of political and voluntary commitment serve to secure social peace. Thus, societies and enterprises benefit in equal measure from a policy of decent work.

7. In solidarity which spans nations and cultures, the social dimension of work must also figure in the international context, such as with staff who work for transnational enterprises. Moreover, solidarity should be practiced with the precariously and informally employed, particularly also with workers who are

seconded to countries, and with those who work on a bogus self-employed basis, who are frequently excluded from social security and rights — legally or illegally.

8. The informalization of the labour market is amplified by the globalization of markets. The concomitant economic division of tasks promotes for instance the decoupling of specific services and production stages from the core enterprise, ranging to work at home in bogus self-employment. The threat to move jobs to countries where costs are lower will remain until worldwide agreements have been reached to protect employment.

9. The situation is already dramatic today, given that more than two-thirds of the working population are employed in the so-called informal economy in many countries. Undignified work is particularly common, and frequently is the sad normality.

10. The liberalization of the labour market means for most of those concerned a profound lack of security to plan their future. Neither international nor national employment policy has so far developed coherent concepts to put a stop to these negative trends so that people can live and survive by the work of their own hands and perhaps even achieve a certain prosperity and security for themselves and their families. Individual human and social needs must be harmonized and balanced with economic requirements in working processes as far as possible.

11. In many countries with a high share of informal workers, such workers make a considerable contribution to the economy without being included in the statistics. Nonetheless, most informal workers live in poverty. Grass-roots and self-help-orientated projects aiming to fight poverty start by providing education and subsidizing training, providing initial equipment to business start-ups and trying to improve access to microcredits. Although development cooperation of state and civil society players looks at the respective political and economic framework of a country, the significance of the right to organize, of the right of political expression, of the right to represent interests together in the informal economy, is nonetheless still too frequently disregarded.

12. Legislatures must create reliable framework conditions for the self-organization of those who are engaged in informal dependent employment or self-employment. Access to social security systems and the establishment of enterprises must be made possible quickly and without undue bureaucracy. Because of their unclear status, informal workers are frequently subject to considerable arbitrary treatment on the part of law enforcement agencies. This situation hinders the growth of entrepreneurial activity, and hence prevents the creation of more jobs. Legal security thus not only leads to the creation of more jobs, but also makes it easier to enforce core labour standards in societies with a high proportion of informal workers.

13. Governments must undertake to implement a policy of employment promotion and of ensuring social peace. Transnational enterprises and private investors should orientate their corporate policy in countries with a high share of informal workers in such a way that they in no way integrate informal work into their corporate policy by reducing the number of jobs and by outsourcing, but must strive to create official, skilled and socially secure jobs.

14. In countries with largely formal employment, in turn, which are confronted by increasing informalization and by reductions in social achievements caused by

global competition, employment policy must aim to make the changes that are under way in the requirements made in the world of work socially just, and by these means must preserve social peace. Employment policy is not a field of work which can be considered in isolation; in particular it must be viewed in conjunction with international economic policy and national educational and family policy. Germany's EU membership requires a broadening of the outlook to include the European employment situation.

15. It cannot be overlooked that conditions on the labour market are also becoming more difficult in Germany. Deregulation and outsourcing, with which Governments and enterprises react to globalization, weaken the collective representation of interests of those in dependent employment. High unemployment leads to a situation in which people must accept ever-worsening working conditions.

16. The first goal of policymakers must be to secure and create decent employment so that all men and women can make a living. High unemployment is the main cause of marginalization and impoverishment. Work must be socially secure, and wages must be fair.

17. The world of work is starting to divide. In addition to employment relationships which are subject to obligatory social insurance and collective agreements, one increasingly finds precarious employment relationships with unstable employment, greater health risks and in some cases exploitative, low wages.

18. In order to put in place a global employment policy, it is necessary to establish internationally valid principles and rights at work based on a consensus of ethical ideas which satisfy the definition of decent work. Over and above this, the naturally restricted mobility of the labour market requires globally mobile markets, such as the capital market, to be effectively regulated in order to not push employment from the focus of the protection requirement. In this sense, trade unions and the Church will continue in their endeavours for decent work.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all

Statement submitted by Christian Children's Fund, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

1. NGOs endorsing this statement offer the following for consideration during the 46th session of the Commission on Social Development: to guarantee full employment and decent work for all, youth must have access to viable employment opportunities.

2. As Christian Children's Fund (CCF) promotes youth agency and raises the voice of youth as partners in development, youth from around the world repeatedly place unemployment high on the list of problems they would like to help solve. Youth request support to undertake vocational training and small business development and want to help themselves and others.

3. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the world is facing a growing youth employment crisis.[1] Young people, ages 15-24, represent 41% of the world's unemployed.[2] Youth unemployment rates are 2-3 times[3] higher than those of adults.[4] The ILO found that "one out of every three youth in the world is either seeking but unable to find work, has given up the job search entirely or is working but still living below the US$2 a day poverty line."[5]

4. Young people often find themselves "at the back of the line" for jobs[6] and are unable to find jobs in the formal economy.[7] Youth "have to engage in some form of work in order to survive"[8] or are forced to migrate — from rural to urban areas, or to other countries — in search of work. While the informal economy may provide youth with a source of income, there has been a rise in the number of unemployed urban youth who are turning to prostitution, gangs, street crime, and armed conflict.[9]

5. A twenty-one year old in Afghanistan explains that the culture of violence after years of war leaves young people vulnerable to exploitation by political groups and that vocational training and meaningful work are protective factors against the temptation to leave the community to join warlords.

6. While many countries have made progress in providing basic education to children, many school systems are now faced with,[10] and ill-equipped for, the learning needs of youth. A challenge for many countries remains providing youth with access to secondary education, especially lower secondary school.[11] Of those youth who have access, they often do not receive an education that responds to their needs, it is of low quality, and it does not prepare them for employment or self-employment.

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1 ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, 2006. Foreword.
2 United Nations, *World Youth Report 2003: The Global Situation of Young People*, Youth Employment; 2004; 61.
3 World Bank, *World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development*. September 20, 2005.
4 Niall O'Higgins, International Labour Office, The Challenge of Youth Unemployment, 1997.
5 ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, 2006. Foreword.
6 United Nations, *World Youth Report 2003: The Global Situation of Young People*, Youth Employment; 2004; 62.
7 Ibid. 67-68.
8 Ibid. 67-68.
9 Ibid. 67-68.
10 World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*. September 16, 2006; 31.
11 Ibid.

7. Research has found that "low levels of youth unemployment can coexist with a weak youth labor market as a result of extended participation in education by a high proportion of the young population. Education and training policies are thus inextricably linked to patterns of unemployment."[12]

8. "For young people, jobs provide a source not only of income, but also of dignity and self-respect. Youth who enter the workforce with limited job prospects, underdeveloped skills and inadequate education face the highest risk of long-term unemployment, underemployment and low-wage employment throughout their working lives, making them more vulnerable to social exclusion. Furthermore, unemployment and inadequate employment among youth contribute to high levels of poverty." [13]

9. "Without the right foothold from which to start out right in the labor market, young people are less able to make choices that will improve their own job prospects and those of their future dependents. This, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of insufficient education, low-productivity employment and working poverty from one generation to the next." [14]

10. To address the needs of youth, targeted attention and programmes are necessary. These could include:

1. National and community-based programmes for youth on livelihoods and employment, including non-formal and vocational education.[15] Vocational training allows youth to access skilled employment. However, in order for vocational training programmes to be successful, they must be coupled with comprehensive market surveys, ensuring that there is a demand for the skill and that there are job opportunities in that field. For example, in the Kiambu District of Kenya, CCF supports over 1000 young people made vulnerable by HIV in their communities through vocational training. The vocational skills selected were chosen as a result of a local market survey that the youth themselves helped to conduct.

2. Vocational training should be linked to microfinance programmes, allowing trained youth to start a business, if they choose to do so. Another important option to ensure the success of vocational training programmes is linking such programmes to job placement or apprenticeship programmes.

3. Income generating activities for youth through microfinance and small enterprise training need to be promoted, as well as youth cooperatives that foster and support creative and innovative ideas. It is important to develop an entrepreneurship spirit in youth, in order for them to be generators of jobs, rather than only job seekers.

4. Young people need to be provided with opportunities to produce quality products that can be marketed on a larger scale, through improving youth access to credit facilities and coaching.

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[12] United Nations, *World Youth Report 2003: The Global Situation of Young People*, Youth Employment; 2004; 62.

[13] Ibid. 67-68.

[14] ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, 2006. Foreword.

[15] World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*, September 16, 2006; 209.

5. Young people need to be provided with opportunities to "learn through work" — which would allow youth to gain practical and transferable skills and allow employers to get to know the youth they may employ in the future.[16]

6. Young people need to be involved in the development and evaluation of youth-targeted education, skills, or employment programmes.

7. Youth capacities to organize themselves and advocate for their rights need to be strengthened and incorporated into formal or non-formal vocational education programmes so their voices can be heard and their needs and expectations fulfilled by Governments and society. They need to be seen not as a problem but as an important opportunity to enhance and promote changes to build a more inclusive, equitable, sustainable, democratic, and just world for all.

8. Youth forums and networking need to be promoted and/or strengthened so youth can build economic alliances and/or partnerships among themselves, learn from each other and join efforts to create innovative and/or alternative enterprises at national, regional, and global levels.

9. It is necessary to integrate life skills, health, family planning, STI prevention, and gender equity discussions and information into all community-based livelihood and employment programmes for older children and youth. Providing youth the knowledge and understanding about issues that affect them enables them to make more informed decisions on important topics.

10. Youth informal employability needs to be increased by developing their skills during primary education. Schools could come up with extra-curricular trainings in various skills to ensure that children who drop out can easily start a small enterprise to raise funds for further education or specialized skills training.

11. Economic resources and education opportunities for the poorest youth need to be facilitated, so that this sector of the youth population can be included in these important activities. Usually these opportunities are inaccessible to youth living in poverty.

12. Governments should adopt policies and initiatives to promote economic growth and job creation.[17] According to the ILO Director-General, "despite increased economic growth, the inability of economies to create enough decent and productive jobs is hitting the world's young especially hard."[18]

13. Increasing the employment intensity of economic growth, "especially in the rapidly expanding sectors of the economy. Governments can establish incentive structures that promote employment-intensive growth by directing investment to sectors that are more employment-intensive."[19]

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[16] United Nations, *World Youth Report 2003: The Global Situation of Young People*, Youth Employment; 2004; 67-68.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Statement by UN International Labor Organization (ILO) Director-General Juan Somavia. October 30, 2006.

[19] United Nations, *World Youth Report 2003: The Global Situation of Young People*, Youth Employment; 2004; 62.

Note: Statement endorsed by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, Elizabeth Seton Federation and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

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Statement submitted by International Council on Social Welfare, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

1. Introduction

1. "...in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, employment and decent work need to be at the centre of economic and social policies"[1]. The statement by ECOSOC rightly suggests that employment cuts through an array of social issues such as human rights, discrimination and poverty.

2. The 2007 review by the Commission for Social Development noted that unemployment stood at nearly 200 million worldwide. The forecast growth of almost 5% will do little to positively alter the 2006 statistics in 2007. This is serious as high economic growth cannot be sustained on a long-term basis with the current rate of unemployment[2].

3. Jobless growth is increasing and conditions of work for the employed leave much to be desired. Youth unemployment is worrying, more so for young women. Although child labour is on a slight decline, one in seven of the world's children are still involved in child labour. Women are continually subject to inequality in employment. Migrant workers face exploitation and other human rights violations within the workplace. HIV/AIDS compounds the situation further.

2. Employment Policies - increase employment, improve job security and provide proper remuneration.

1. Most people living in poverty are NOT unemployed but work in low-income jobs that prevent them from enjoying a basic standard of living. Employers and Governments are contributing to the cycle of poverty through negative employment policies. Positive policies ensure the rights of workers, a minimum wage and a working environment that is safe and free from discrimination against any class, creed or social group. These policy guidelines go back to the Employment Policy Convention of 1964.[3] These guidelines can reduce retrenchment during economic slowdown, assist the unemployed in finding work, provide job support, encourage later retirement, enhance productivity and provide job security[4].

2. Winning policy formulas include active labour market policies, social security and strict wage policies. Spain, Denmark and Austria increased employment and improved their economies through fiscal policy, tax reviews and regional-enabling policies. The Spanish employment strategy focused on vocational and occupational

[1] http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/index.shtml
[2] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/download/getb07en.pdf
[3] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/hrdr/instr/c_122.htm
[4] http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/25/59/39251262.pdf

training and employment stability[5]. The Republic of Korea's Employment Insurance System ensured that laid- off workers received unemployment benefits and quicker rehiring. This system, covering 4/5 of workers by 2002, helped the Republic of Korea not only reduce unemployment but also maintain security for employed people[6].

3. General microeconomic or macroeconomic policy helps achieve decent employment for all. Certain affected groups require more than general policies. General policies are insufficient for women, migrant workers, people with disabilities, older people or youth, who all suffer discrimination.

3. Youth

1. Employable young people make up half the world's unemployed; an alarming situation that needs to be addressed if economies are to be sustained. A vast majority of youth cannot read or write whilst others, though well educated, lack employable skills[7]. Recommendations from the World Programme of Action for Youth apply now - including making education a priority and reducing discrimination based on gender, religion, age or ethnicity. Developing countries need to be concerned with 'brain drain' by ensuring that educated youth are not lured to developed nations offering higher paying jobs. The provision of grants and support for self-employment and job creation in technical fields as well as programmes to help vulnerable groups of youth seeking employment are necessary[8].

2. The youth market could spur economies and contribute to development of nations. Most developing countries have a short window of opportunity to get this right before their record numbers of youth become middle-aged, and they lose their demographic dividend. This isn't just enlightened social policy. This may be one of the most profound decisions a developing country will ever make to banish poverty and galvanize its economy.[9]

4. Women

1. The Global Employment Trends for Women show progress in the area of employment. More women are participating in paid work. Many however are in informal work thus not affording them adequate remuneration or security[10].

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[5] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/download/esp4.pdf

[6] Ibid.

[7] http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21049364~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html

[8] http://www.un.org/events/youth98/backinfo/ywpa2000.htm#Priority%202:

[9] http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21049364~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html

[10] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/download/getw07.pdf

2. Many women are still unemployed; their numbers stand at 6.6 percent[11]. For those in gainful employment, a worrying wage gap still exists despite many women being educated and fully qualified, sometimes even more so than their male counterparts[12]. The problem is not exclusive to developing nations – the gender wage gap still remains at 15% in all sectors in EU member States.[13]

3. UNIFEM rightly proposes that labour market analysts and economists take into account the contribution of women in informal work. It also suggested the use of an informal economy budget analysis to assess possible biases in the allocation of Government resources[14]. Familial demands on women contribute to gender inequality. Governments need to address this with better policies responding to the challenges of balancing familial and caregiver obligations including providing day-care centres and paid maternity and paternity leave.

5. People with disabilities

1. People with disabilities are nearing 10% of the world's population. They are no longer a minority that can be ignored. There are almost 400 million adults with mental or physical disabilities and of those up to 80% are unemployed in developing countries.[15] People with disabilities need job training as much as their able-bodied peers. Their contribution to productivity, efficiency and ultimately to the economy is not in dispute[16].

6. Migrant Workers

1. Migrants do not usually face issues of unemployment but rather of decent employment. Integration to enable migrants to contribute to the economy and productivity of the host nation in return for assimilation is a fitting strategy[17]. In many nations even basic social protection for migrant workers is denied. Minimum labour and workplace standards have been reported to be effective in many countries, even for undocumented or illegal migrants[18].

2. The decent work problem can be improved through Government policy, subsequent to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, in particular, the recommendation that trade unions provide training, orientation integration/reintegration and other

[11] Ibid.
[12] http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCOnePager20.pdf (June 2006)
[13] European Commission, "On Equality between Women and Men", Brussels, 2005. (as quoted in; http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/download/getw07.pdf)
[14] http://www.un-ngls.org/women-2005.pdf
[15] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/disability/download/codeeng.pdf
[16] http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang--en/WCMS_082586/index.htm
[17] http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/events/2005/demographic_change/papademetriou_txt_en.pdf
[18] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/projects/asia.htm

services a migrant worker may access to mitigate against trafficking and other migrant abuse[19].

7. Children

1. The number of children in the worst forms of labour fell by 11% but there was an increase of 15.6 million in other sectors[20]. Child labour has not decreased. It has just changed. Child labour is often sidelined by economic and financial policy because there is no obvious link between the abolition of child labour and economic gain.

2. The policies must involve all stakeholders. There needs to be active and thorough research on child labour in every country. Research needs to be linked to awareness-raising activities, close cooperation between NGOs and Government in eradication efforts, national plans of action that consolidate efforts which ensure policies are backed by adequate powers of enforcement.

3. Besides trafficking and forced labour by employers, some children are forced to work because their parents are unable to carry the burden for reasons including disability, hiring discrimination and unfair wages. Child labour may be reduced further with proper employment policies aimed at other social groups that may not seem interlinked to child rights.

8. HIV/AIDS

1. More than 40 million people are suffering from this disease worldwide. Ninety-five per cent of them are in developing countries and about a third are working-age youth. There is a need for active employment policies. The economy of a country with a high number of HIV/AIDS sufferers loses with discriminatory employment. Workplace employment policies to protect workers with HIV/AIDS and control the spread of the disease have worked and should be replicated everywhere[21]. Governments must take the lead in formulating a set of universal policy guidelines that companies and organisations include in their company policies as well as optional policies that are workable depending on the nature of the company, business and socio-political climate of a country.

9. Older people

1. Currently almost 700 million people are over 60. By 2050 there will be about 2 billion people over 60. Eighty per cent of older people will live in the developing world. One way to help address the issue is through employment and social

[19] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actrav/genact/socprot/migrant/migrant1.htm
[20] http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991223775&Language=EN
[21] http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/oldwww/infsources/hiv_aids/WorkplacePolicy.pdf

protection.[22] Social protection involves provision of health care and income security. Whilst pension schemes can provide social protection, the growing number of people who will become pensioners in the near future will be more than most economies can sustain, hence the need to incorporate older people into the workforce to continue their contribution to the economy. This would also be helpful to older people who will not be eligible for pensions and do not have the luxury of retiring early.

2. Older women are less likely to have literacy or numeracy skills, still less likely to qualify for a pension and are most likely to end up working to support themselves and dependants.[23] Gender stereotypes do women no favours, e.g., believing that women even as young as 35 are too old to work due to familial commitments and disinterest in career promotion. These women are effectively 'culled' from the workforce on this assumption for which there is no evidence.[24]

10. Conclusion

1. There cannot be change within the employment sphere without total commitment to national policies designed to eradicate poverty, increase the economic participation of all people and ensure decent work.

2. Global commitments already exist. UN Programmes and plans of action targeted at specific social groups are a good base and guide. The World Programme of Action for Youth looks at many ways a State can increase youth participation in the economy as well as ensuring proper wage and working conditions. The Programme also provides a 10-step, simple guide[25] to bringing about a policy overhaul. The guide states that participation from all groups from the outset is key, with a tabled budget and needs analysis conducted and utilized to frame policy.

3. In a similar vein, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons approaches disability from a human rights perspective. An implementation guide is readily available. The Programme brief[26] outlines areas for change such as the inclusion of disabled people in decision-making, prevention of disability, equal opportunities as well as training for acquiring employable skills.

4. The United Nations Family Programme covers all policies that relate to matters of the family including family members living with HIV/AIDS, parental roles, intra-familial well-being, and family policy development.[27] This could well include support

[22] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/older/download/engage.pdf
[23] Ibid.
[24] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/older/download/olderwomen.pdf
[25] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/nationalpolicy.htm
[26] http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=23
[27] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/TenthAnv/UN%20Family%20Programme.PDF

for women in informal work in the household and working mothers facing occupational discrimination based on their familial obligations.

5. The Madrid Plan of Action for the Ageing deals with continued employment through old age and income support to ensure older people maintain a decent standard of living.

It would seem that most UN programmes and plans seek a similar goal; the attainment of basic human rights and dignity. They also agree tha. to achieve this the State needs to revamp national policies. Governments should plan their programmes of action to include poverty, unemployment and decent work initiatives, tailor-made for the demographic make-up and socio-political situation of their respective countries.

It is only through empowerment, employment and social protection that poverty can be eradicated and human rights upheld.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all

Statement submitted by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

Introduction

1. In 1999 the Association was recognized as an NGO by the Italian Government. The Association is a Catholic Community, made up of people who have chosen to share their lives with those who are socially neglected and oppressed. The Association seeks to fight injustice by sharing and living side by side with the poorest and those who have been abandoned. The members of the community live in home families ("*case famiglia*"), therapeutic communities for drug addicts, and work in social cooperatives and in various projects aimed at social development and at fighting in a non-violent manner to remove the causes of marginalization. The community is open to believers and non-believers, to those who wish to contribute to a fairer and more just society.

2. The Association is based in Italy but operates all over the world and in particular in Europe (Italy, San Marino, the Netherlands, Croatia, Albania, Russian Federation, Romania, Moldova), Africa (Kenya, Zambia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda), Asia (Palestine, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), South America (Brazil, Chile, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Bolivia), and in Australia.

3. Within the framework of the 46th session of the Commission for Social Development having *"Promoting full employment and decent work for all"* as core theme, it is important to underline the great importance the Association gives to this theme.

4. For the Association this is a fundamental aim to achieve in order to remove the causes generating marginalization. The Association is committed to achieve such great aims through implementing several activities within its projects. Some examples in brief:

"Cicetekelo" project in Ndola (Zambia) and *"Time to live, time to share"* project in La Paz (Bolivia) have both been implemented with the aim to reintegrate street children in society giving them the possibility to learn, to find and to maintain a job.

5. The street children phenomenon is unfortunately quite widespread. Street children live in extremely vulnerable conditions; they are marginalized from any socio-economic context. Most of them do not attend school, and the set of bad conditions related to life in the streets- poverty, hunger, violence and any kind of abuse, leads them into the road of the so-called "drug of the poor" - glue sniffing-, therefore, their health and personal self-esteem worsen day after day.

Main aims of these projects are:

(a) Helping children recover their dignity as human beings and safeguard their development, paying particular attention to the educational, social and ethical aspects;
(b) Reintegrating them in school;
(c) Providing them with professional training;
(d) Guiding children towards economic independence and full self-fulfilment.

These projects have the same goals and they differ only in the methods since they are set in completely different social, cultural and economic environments.

"Cicetekelo" project

6. In Zambia 83 per cent of the population live under the poverty line. The country is deeply affected by HIV/AIDS pandemic. Extreme poverty, family disintegration and the wide spread of AIDS in the past few years have forced a lot of children to quit school and live by their wits on the street.

7. In this context of deep hardship, in 1998 the Association implemented "Cicetekelo project". Cicetekelo means "hope" in local language, and welcomes street children willing to change their lifestyle.

The project focuses on two major areas:

(a) Education: To provide literary education;

(b) Skills training: To enable the youths to become self reliant in the future, several professional training courses are made available: carpentry, mechanics, woodcarving/soap-stone sculptures, fabrication of building materials, farming and cattle breeding. Each course lasts three years and youngsters are assisted by a teacher for both practice and theoretical lessons.

8. At the end of the second year, the youngsters that reach certain level of preparation and maturity have to take state examination and are awarded a Certificate of Professional Proficiency recognized by the Zambian Government. During the third year this professional training becomes more intensive and youngsters start to receive economic aid for their work; half of it has to be deposited in a special fund that will be given back to them at the end of their professional experience, together with a set of professional tools to guarantee the basic conditions so that they can start their own business once they leave the programme.

9. After the three-year programme, youngsters are prepared and trained to enter the job market.
However, as it is so hard to find a job in Ndola, a few possibilities are made available by the project itself:

- Some youth are employed within the project through a standard contract of employment;
- Agreements are in place with local firms willing to employ people on a regular basis, being guarantor and tutor for youngsters against the firm and vice versa;
- Youth who are willing to start their own business are supported by providing the necessary amount of money at the end of the course, plus a set of tools, and they are supported for one year for all difficulties.

"Time to live, time to share" project

10. This project has also been implemented due to the deeply affected socio-economic situation in Bolivia. In fact, based on the data gathered after the 2001 census, Bolivia has 8,274,325 inhabitants, 45 per cent of whom are under 18 years of age; about 2,500,000 of that number are children living in poverty and more than 616,000 of them are child-workers. Just in La Paz and El Alto, these working children number about 3,700.

11. Considering the situation of street children, the project has developed a well framed programme planning not only professional training but also a true individual rehabilitation process, to recover their dignity and inner life with a particular focus on the spiritual and psychological aspects.

12. To this end, after a brief period spent building up acquaintance and friendly relationship, young people start a special programme structured in several stages, with the main aim to let youngsters realize what their skills are, the positive aspects of their life, understand that it is possible to live a life based on truth, justice and love, and also become independent economically. During this awareness process, providing professional training and favouring going back to school are two aspects of utmost importance.

13. For the second phase of this recovery programme, young people are included into a training course to learn some particular jobs such as carpentry, machinery, bakery, pasta and ice-cream production, cattle breeding and vegetable growing. Illiterate youngsters are taught to read and write. Afterwards, their professional training is completed by educational stages at any of the Association's work activities (restaurant, ice cream parlour) so that they can gain the training and skills to meet the quality level required by the labour market. At the end of the programme, young people are helped to look for a job and, for a period of at least one year, they get all the necessary support and assistance to face all the difficulties.

Professional training for women and micro-credit programmes for people affected in different ways by the HIV/AIDS pandemic

Rainbow project Zambia

14. In Africa AIDS orphans are taken care by their widowed mothers, their extended family (aunts, grandmothers) or distant relatives. Given the high number of children without parents and the poverty they live in, it is of utmost importance to provide economic support to these families because they are on the brink of disintegration and hunger. Besides the short-term assistance that can be provided, it is essential to create job opportunities so that the adults that look after these children can have an income to sustain the family.

15. The agricultural micro-finance programme was launched in Zambia in 2000 in order to give the poorest families the chance to find a decent job, to provide for food, using and improving their professional skills acquired along years of experience, but that they could never make use of due to lack of access to the factors of production.

16. The programme aims at finding a balance between daily and long-term needs through a "twin track approach". In the first track of the programme, people are trained for 2 weeks, followed by updating courses. Afterwards they are given an initial capital in kind- fertilizers and seeds. In the second track the people targeted by the programme are given food, health and school assistance for 3 months so that they are not forced to use the initial capital given to survive.

The programme involves families for a period of 4 years and it works as follows:

- First year – the beneficiaries receive training, initial capital (seeds, fertilizers, etc.), technical assistance and food assistance, schooling for children
- Second year – they have to attend updating courses, technical assistance and further capital in agricultural input; then
- Third year – further technical assistance and agricultural inputs
- Fourth year – the agricultural inputs are given for free

The beneficiaries are expected to pay back the capital in kind- agricultural products- but are not expected to pay any interest on it. The rate of paying back this capital is around 95-98 per cent.

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Statement submitted by the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

Introduction

1. We strongly urge Governments to actively strengthen their commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme Action of the World Summit for Social Development on the "promotion of the goal of full employment as a basic priority". Consistent with the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, we propose the following:

(a) That youth[1] including youth without parental care have right of access to education, training and employment in decent jobs[2] that prepare them for participation and contribution as adults in society;

(b) That the fulfilment of children's rights to survival and development depends on economic support primarily provided by full employment and work that respects the human dignity of and provides a living wage for their parents, grandparents or other caregivers;

(c) That youth, including those without parental care, and adults have the right to freedom from work that is harmful to their health or to their physical, psychological, spiritual, moral or social development;

(d) That youth and their parents or other caregivers have the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, and language.

Critical concerns within a human rights framework

2. Youth access to education, training and employment: a little over ten years ago, the United Nations General Assembly called upon governments to ensure a decent education and job opportunities for young people to lift them out of poverty and protect their health. Although a number of Governments have submitted national plans in response to the World Programme of Action for Youth (1995), more Governments need to develop these plans and all Governments need to move assertively towards implementation and the submission of periodic reports of progress. The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right to education at the primary, secondary, and higher levels as well as vocational information and guidance. It provides a multifaceted design for education, including preparation for a responsible life in a free society.

3. Youth with disabilities are almost always substantially less likely to start school, and in many countries have lower transition rates, resulting in lower school attainment than that associated with gender, rural residence, or economic status. Intervention with this specific vulnerable population is, therefore, critical. Appropriate rehabilitation services, accommodation and support services are needed to ensure their access to education, training and employment.

4. The Secretary-General, in his report on the follow-up to the world programme of action for youth (A/62/61-E/2007/7), presents appalling statistics regarding the

[1] Throughout this statement we have adopted the United Nations General Assembly definition of "youth", as those persons falling between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive.

[2] Jobs which provide respect for human dignity. International Labour Organization Convention No. 87 defines decent work as productive work in which rights are protected and which generates adequate income.

unemployment of youth. While youth represent half of the 192 million estimated unemployed persons globally, their rates of unemployment are higher and they hold a smaller share of decent jobs. High rates of unemployment and low rates of decent jobs expose youth to poverty and vulnerability to exploitation, including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, engagement in armed conflict, and drug trafficking which lessen their psychological health and long-term productive earning capacity. Sustainable social development requires that youth, including those without parental care, be educated, trained, and employed in decent entry jobs.

5. Full employment for parents: the report of the Secretary-General on promoting full employment and decent work for all (E/CN.5/2007/2) states that unemployment and underemployment have worsened and that over a billion persons working do not earn enough to get themselves and their families out of poverty. Psychological research has shown that the conditions of unemployment and underemployment are resulting in generations of families entrenched in poverty[3] which is detrimental to mental health and psychological well-being.[4] The fulfilment of children's rights to survival, safety, development and participation depends largely on full employment in decent jobs with a living wage and benefits including access to health care for their parents, grandparents or other caregivers. This fact is supported by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

6. The significance of parental employment for children's development is also supported by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) which recognizes "the right to work ... [and] to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular, remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with ... a decent living for themselves and their families ..." Because women have persistently higher unemployment rates than men, gender equity in employment and the economic empowerment of women are crucial to the development of children, families, and communities.

7. Human trafficking: trafficking taken as a form of work, rather than a violation of basic human rights, must be condemned and eliminated as a major global concern that affects countless numbers of children, youth and women. Neither the report of the Secretary-General on promoting full employment and decent work for all nor the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the world programme of action for youth addresses this serious form of human rights violations. Children and youth, including those without parental care, who are trafficked are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. Accurate statistical data on the numbers involved in trafficking, either as victims or perpetrators, are both scarce and unreliable and research is sorely lacking on the health, physical, and psychological impact of trafficking on children and youth. However, drawing from psychological research on child maltreatment and victimization, we expect these effects to be quite negative indeed.[5] Once again, the Convention on the Rights of the Child names human

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[3] Thompson, T. and Hupp, S. (Eds.). (1992). *Saving children at risk: Poverty and disabilities.* Newbury Park: Sage.

[4] Mandershild, R. W. and Sonnenschein, A. (Eds.). (1994). *Mental health: United States.* Washington, D.C.: Center for Mental Health Services.

[5] Rafferty, Y. (in press). The impact of trafficking on children: Psychological and social policy perspectives. *Child Development Perspectives.* Bottoms, B. L. and Quas, J. A. (Eds.) (2006). Emerging Directions in Child Maltreatment Research. *Journal of Social Issues.* Washington, D.C. Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

trafficking as a violation of human rights and requires State Parties to act aggressively to prevent it.[6]

8. Discrimination in education and employment: there is limited attention in both the report of the Secretary-General on promoting full employment and the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the world programme of action for youth on discrimination in education and employment. Altogether, both reports acknowledge that there are continued inequalities in education, training, and employment among racial, ethnic, gender and disabled groups, especially discrimination of girls, and ethnic minority, indigenous and disabled youth, which results in continuing high rates of poverty among them, thereby limiting their survival, safety, development and social participation. The various human rights standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, call for the end of discrimination, and the Beijing Platform for Action and the Durban Programme of Action identify goals and policy and programmatic strategies for the reduction and elimination of racial, gender, and religious discrimination in education and employment.

9. Recommendations:

(a) We call upon those governments who have not developed action plans for the health, education and employment of young people in response to the World Programme of Action for Youth (1995) to do so with a sense of urgency and with the full participation of youth, paying special attention to youth without parental care, and urge all governments to implement these plans and to submit periodic reports of progress;

(b) We urge all governments to develop and implement policies for the creation and implementation of full employment and decent work with a living wage for parents, grandparents or other caregivers, especially those living in poverty, in order to allow them to properly attend to the survival and development of their children, with access to health care;

(c) We call upon governments, particularly those with high rates of poverty, to prioritize and implement programmes for the education and training and the creation of decent work with a living wage for parents, grandparents or other caregivers, and to integrate these programmes within their national plans for economic and social development;

(d) We urge governments who have not yet done so to establish and implement laws and policies to stop the involvement of children and youth, including those without parental care, in all forms of labour which are hazardous to their survival, safety, health, education and psychological and social development.

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[6] According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "State Parties shall take all appropriate ... measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form, ... protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare, ... promote physical and psychological recovery and reintegration of a child victim, ... recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous to or interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development ..."

We further urge them to recognize that trafficking of children and youth for sexual exploitation and involvement in armed conflict is a violation of human rights and human dignity which must cease;

(e) We call upon governments to provide specialized interventions and adequate and appropriate services for children and youth who have been trafficked and involved in armed conflict, hazardous labour or sexual exploitation, in order to address their physical, psychological, social, and educational needs, including reintegration into their families, schools and communities;

(f) We call upon governments to especially target children and youth and caregivers of children and youth, who are continuing victims of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, religion, disabilities, sexual orientation or gender identity, providing them with full access to education and training that prepares them for full economic, social and political participation and that allows them to have decent employment and income;

(g) We call upon governments to establish and maintain procedures for the valid and reliable gathering and evaluation of statistical data for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the education, training, employment and remuneration of youth and parents or other caregivers, including grandparents, disaggregated according to gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, religion and disability status;

(h) We call upon governments to provide policies and programmes that address the disability aspects of education, employment and accessibility, rehabilitation, health and social protection in order for the promotion of inclusion and decent work to be successful.

Note: Statement endorsed and supported by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Association of Charities, Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent of Paul, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Elizabeth Seton Federation, International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Council of Psychologists, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, International Women's Anthropology Conference, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, SOS Kinderdorf International and UNANIMA International.

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Statement submitted by HelpAge International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2008/1.

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Statement

1. HelpAge International is a global network striving for the rights of disadvantaged older people to economic and physical security; health care and social services; and support in their caregiving role across the generations. With 69 affiliates in more than 50 countries, and at least 300 other partners, the HelpAge International network brings together hundreds of organizations worldwide.

Five years on — review of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

2. The 46th session of the Commission for Social Development is critical for older men and women. It is an opportunity for Member States to take decisive action to achieve the Madrid Plan of Action target of halving old age poverty by 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

3. Today 11 per cent of the world's population is over 60 years of age; by 2050 the proportion will be 22 per cent, with the greatest increase taking place in the developing world.[1] In most societies, older people are essential contributors to their families and communities. In countries affected by HIV and AIDS, grandparents play a vital role in caring for sick people and orphans. Grandparents are the mainstay of support for children whose parents have migrated to find work or have been killed in conflict.

4. All too often however, older people are viewed in a negative light. Their contributions, past or present, are ignored, and their rights are overlooked. Whatever their circumstances, older people have the same right as anyone else to dignity, social security, an adequate standard of living, health and social services, and participation in society.

What bottom up reviews tell us

5. The Madrid Plan of Action has a bottom up review process. Bottom up reviews conducted by network members of HelpAge International during 2007 reveal that older people are still lacking financial security, good health care and participation in society. Older people want to be respected and valued for who they are and to have their rights realized.

6. HelpAge International believes that these demands can and should be achieved through the delivery of universal social (non-contributory) pensions, affordable health care and anti-discriminatory legislation.

7. Results of official regional consultations and reports of Member States on the Madrid Plan of Action reveal that while there is some progress in implementing parts of it, the political will to support older people is weak. Few Member States are using the bottom up process to assess implementation. It is increasingly evident that the views and voices of poor older women and men are not being systematically reflected in official reports. Financial resources targeted at older people are not accompanying national ageing policies.

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[1] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Population Ageing 2006 Wallchart* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XIII.2).

Investment in older people is long overdue — age demands action

8. Renewed commitment to and implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action by Member States is critical to respond to the voiced concerns and rights of older people and the provisions of the decent work agenda. Older people themselves have the wisdom and drive to contribute to their own well-being and that of their families. Mechanisms to support them need to be developed.

9. In 2007, on 1 October, the International Day of Older Persons, older people in 27 countries met with government representatives and demanded that they fulfil their commitments under the Madrid Plan of Action and national legislation, where it exists. The year 2008 will see more action in more countries.

10. Older people said then that regular income, alongside affordable health care, are essential to securing a society for all ages. Poverty reduction in older age is and must remain a key to the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action and the realization of older people's rights. Member States must renew political will to take action on ageing, include regular income and affordable health care for all and ensure non-discriminatory legislation.

Tackling poverty through regular income and health care

11. Income insecurity, problems in accessing health care and social exclusion contribute to and exacerbate poverty. They are the major concerns of older people. Older women and men have the right to social security and access to health care. Regular income in the form of universal social pensions enables older men and women to access health care and other basic services.

12. An estimated 96 million older people still live on less than $1 per day.[2] Older men and women experience disproportionate poverty across all regions. Policies to deal with old age poverty are not still consistently included in poverty reduction strategies.

13. Older people are disproportionately poor across the world. In high income countries relative poverty is higher among older people than in the rest of the population.[3] In transition countries in Eastern Europe older people are among the poorest — in Serbia older people make up 17 per cent of the population[4] but 25 per cent of people living below the poverty line.[5] In Bolivia 63 per cent of older people, compared with 59 per cent of the total population, live in poverty[6] and in some districts in Uganda 64 per cent of older people live in absolute poverty compared with 38 per cent of the population as a whole.[7]

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[2] Figures based on World Bank Development Indicators Table, 2005; Barrientos, *Ageing, poverty and public policy in developing countries: New evidence survey*, 2006; Barrientos et al., *Old age poverty in developing countries: Contributions and dependence in later life*, 2003; Kakwani and Subbarao, *Ageing and poverty in Africa and the role of social pensions*, UNDP, 2005.

[3] UNDESA, World Economic and Social Survey 2007, p. 91.

[4] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2005*: The Strength of Diversity, 2005.

[5] *Poverty Reduction Strategy for Serbia*, Belgrade, Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2003.

[6] Bolivia Poverty Map. Unsatisfied Basic needs. Synthesis, la Paz, April 2002.

[7] Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Department of Disability and Elderly, Health Needs of Older Persons: An Assessment Report of Kamuli and Wakiso Districts, May 2002.

14. Regular income supports older people in dealing with their own health needs and in the provision of home care, particularly by older women, to other older relatives, to adult children who are sick or dying of AIDS-related illnesses and to dependent grandchildren. It is often these older women care providers who, because they have worked in the informal sector or at home and have not paid into contributory schemes, are not covered under social security schemes where they exist.

15. Regular income from pensions is vital to support children in intergenerational households, where adults have migrated for work and older people are left behind to care for young children. It enables children to have access to education and more nutritious food and can pay for fuel, water and other basic necessities. Regular income supports participation in community and family and reduces social exclusion.

16. Regular income for all older people is effective for poverty reduction and is affordable. Social grants in South Africa, which includes the social pension, have reduced destitution by two thirds and poverty levels by 48 per cent.[8] We know that universal social pensions are affordable and administratively feasible even in the least developed countries. The International Labour Organization, World Bank and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs have all estimated the cost of affordable social pensions. For the majority of 100 countries surveyed, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimates that the cost of a universal social pension equivalent to $1 per day to everyone over 60 would cost below 2 per cent of gross domestic product, not only in 2005 but also in 2050, taking population ageing into account.[9]

Older people and the decent work agenda

17. Social protection is one of the four pillars of the decent work agenda, the theme of the 46th session of the Commission. Ensuring that older people are covered by social protection in the informal sector should be a core topic for the Commission, alongside the right of older people to decent work and to social security. Work is the norm into very old age for men and for women, often in insecure, demeaning and low paid jobs, often in the informal sector with no social security provision. Age also brings discrimination in the workplace. The less developed the country, the higher the proportion of older people who continue to work. In least developed countries 71 per cent of older men and 37 per cent of older women work compared with 22 per cent of older men and 11 per cent of older women in more developed countries.[1]

Member State action

18. Member State obligations under the decent work agenda, the Madrid Plan of Action and human rights treaties must be recognized and put into action. Member States have the duty to include older people, as well as other groups that are marginalized and discriminated against, in national policies and programmes on work and the furthering of human rights.

[8] Economic Policy Research Institute, South Africa, ODI London presentation, October 2007.

[9] UNDESA, World Economic and Social Survey 2007.

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* E/CN.5/2008/1.

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Statement

Background: the challenges specific to extreme poverty

1. It is often stated that employment, one of the three pillars of social development as agreed in Copenhagen in 1995, is key to poverty reduction. Employment — whether salaried employment or self-employment — is essential for people to live with the security that they will be able to meet their family's needs and participate in and contribute to society.

2. Development projects often cite poverty eradication as their primary goal. However, because they do not take into account the difference between poverty and extreme poverty, often these projects reach only those who are already better off, leaving out the poorest. The Millennium Development Goals Report (2007) emphasizes that poverty reduction has been accompanied by rising inequality.[1] Thus, experience is showing that, in striving to meet the MDGs, the needs of the poor may, in reality, take precedence over those of the extremely poor.[2]

3. The definition of extreme poverty proposed by the founder of International Movement ATD Fourth World, Joseph Wresinski, and presented in the 1996 Despouy report on human rights and extreme poverty, notes that "*The lack of basic security connotes the absence of one or more factors enabling individuals and families to assume basic responsibilities and to enjoy fundamental rights... The lack of basic security leads to chronic poverty when it simultaneously affects several aspects of people's lives, when it is prolonged and when it severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibilities in the foreseeable future.*"[3] A man living in poverty recently stated: "*If a person can't get above the level to where they can live, then to me, that is bondage...We are not free.*"

4. More than simply a lack of money, extreme poverty thus manifests itself as a lack of other resources necessary for establishing a healthy, productive and dignified life. Extreme poverty results in isolation from wider society, meaning that frequently the poorest are unable to access the resources that could potentially help them overcome their circumstances.[4] Such isolation prevents the poorest from exercising their rights and taking on their responsibilities as active citizens.[5] In his 2007 report, "Promoting employment and decent work for all," the United Nations Secretary-General noted, "poverty reduction...[depends] on the ability of the poor to respond to the increasing demand for labour in the more productive categories of employment."[6] However, when the poorest are socially excluded and cannot access productive employment, they cannot reap the benefits of such policies. Training and education — standard practices in

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[1] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007, New York, 2007. p. 8.

[2] World Bank. 2006. *Participatory Approaches to Attacking Extreme Poverty: Case studies led by the International Movement ATD Fourth World.* X. Godinot and Q. Wodon, Eds.

[3] Report presented by Leandro Despouy to the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination Measures and Protection of Minorities. United Nations, Geneva (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/13), Annex III.

[4] World Bank. 2006. *Participatory Approaches to Attacking Extreme Poverty: Case studies led by the International Movement ATD Fourth World.* X. Godinot and Q. Wodon, Eds.

[5] Ibid.

[6] See http://v1.dpi.org/lang-en/resources/details.php?page=853.

employment-based development — are not sufficient to help the poorest re-enter the labour market.

5. During the recent consultation on the Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, people living in poverty in Peru expressed their frustrations in accessing decent work: "*The problem is that, in our country, we know very well that there's no work. And at times, to get a job, people take whatever's available and so all they do is work, work, and work, and they live this way. But they don't have any time to spend with their families.*"[7]
Even when policies are directed towards those living in extreme poverty, feelings of shame and fear may prevent many from accessing such services. One man recounts, "*I have worked for a whole day for just a meal compensation. I have been lured into working for free, expecting to be hired longer if I worked well*".[8] As a population historically taken advantage of, the poorest may feel distrustful of development policies, even those intended to help them.

6. These complex manifestations of extreme poverty call for a multifaceted strategy to address them. There is indeed growing recognition that many employment-based poverty eradication initiatives, while enjoying a certain rate of success, do not effectively reach the poorest. In Bangladesh, BRAC recognizes that in order for the 'ultrapoor' to benefit from microfinance initiatives, opportunity ladders must be created. The four linked components include employment training, a special investment programme including stipend support, social development by providing support to develop livelihoods, and health care services.[9] This initiative attempts to address the barriers preventing the poorest from benefiting from initiatives designed to fight poverty. It recognizes that, among poverty alleviation programmes, one size does not fit all.

7. Recently, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that reaching poverty reduction targets like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) "can easily be achieved at the expense of, rather than in the name of, the poorest and hardest to reach."[10]

Challenges

8. Many people living in extreme poverty have challenges outside the labour realm that keep them from participating in the formal labour market; basic daily survival requires much of their time and attention. The challenges differ from North to South, rural to urban, but difficulties for very poor people remain the same. Among other things, family obligations and frequent absenteeism as a result of poor health may prevent the poorest from maintaining the good attendance records required by most employers.

9. Jane, from the rural United States, recounts that her boss threatened to fire her because she needed to look after her sick daughter: "*I called into work and told them that I couldn't come in*

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[7] International Movement ATD Fourth World. 2007. *"Dignity in the Face of Extreme Poverty" http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/Dignity-in-the-Face-of-Extreme.html.*
[8] World Bank. 2006. *Participatory Approaches to Attacking Extreme Poverty.*
[9] http://www.brac.net/cfpr.htm.
[10] See http://www.wunrn.com/news/2007/07_07/07_09_07/071507_un4.htm.

because I had to be with my daughter... My boss at the time starts cussing and saying that I can either be a stay-at-home mom or I could work... To her, I should have come in to work, should have gotten a babysitter. It didn't matter that I thought that my child's need was greater." In Peru, ATD Fourth World members explained how, unable to find work, they are forced to generate their own, but often their efforts, rather than being encouraged and supported by local authorities, are met with numerous obstacles.

10. ATD Fourth World members living in extreme poverty in the rural United States suggested initiatives to improve their access to work, including subsidized transportation costs, child care, medical coverage, or simply receiving a sufficient wage for employees to cover necessary costs themselves. Many say the most important of these are health care and job security; they need "*sick days, to be able to leave and not get fired if there is an emergency*".

11. Often, low-paying jobs simply do not make sense financially, taking into account transportation and childcare. Says Jane, "*I am not making enough to even go out to work.*" For some, decent work is "*anything that will feed your family... People should feel good about the fact that their family is fed and they have decent housing.*" Policies directed towards the poorest should be based on their strengths and skills, rather than simply providing special work programmes that may further exclude them. When appropriately supported by employment policies, those excluded from work can regain the confidence and skills to return to work.

12. Relationships must be developed with people living in extreme poverty so they become active partners in the development of employment practices targeting their specific needs. Organizations must be prepared to make sustained, long-term commitments. Improving access of the poorest to employment requires meaningful capacity-building, which cannot happen when projects are oriented towards short-term results.

13. Encouraging local businesses to partner with people living in extreme poverty has proved a fruitful approach to eradicating poverty through fair employment practices. Doing so often inspires confidence in others, who otherwise might be wary of employing poor populations but who have already developed trust in well-known businesses. The partnership also engenders a sense of solidarity between people living in extreme poverty and local business and community leaders, an essential step in eliminating stereotypes and creating quality job opportunities.

14. In partnership with people living in extreme poverty, ATD Fourth World launched a project in Madagascar through which young people receive computer and Internet training. They have a responsibility to share their new found knowledge with other youth, so that the benefits of the program are multiplied exponentially. The employees have created an online artisan co-op through which local artisans can sell their wares. ATD Fourth World pilots the project and, in collaboration with businesses, encourages the participation of the most disadvantaged communities.

15. The project demonstrates that throughout the process of establishing trusting relationships with the poorest in creating employment opportunities, the voices of those living in extreme poverty can be actively solicited and incorporated, providing a real world example of how good

employment practices can be practically implemented to create quality job opportunities for the poorest.

16. Recommendations

The issue of employment as it relates to the very poor has been receiving increased attention. However, few initiatives directly target people living in extreme poverty, as their social and physical exclusion make them a difficult population to address.

The following points are recommended for consideration:

(a) Supporting the extremely poor in returning to the labour market requires a sustained and long-term effort. Improving the access of the poorest to employment opportunities requires meaningful capacity-building, which cannot happen when projects are oriented towards short-term results;

(b) In order to develop employment policies directly and actively target the poorest, the needs and voices of the poorest must be actively solicited. Training and education — standard practices in employment-based development — are not sufficient to help the poorest re-enter the labour market. Local, decent jobs must be available and accessible to the poorest in order for them to benefit fully from employment training programmes. Access to decent, safe, and fulfilling work is fundamental to the achievement of social development, and people in poverty are the first actors in efforts to secure dignified work. Their daily efforts should be harnessed and supported, and their experiences capitalized upon, to develop long-term, inclusive, and harmonious employment for all. Policies directed towards the poorest should be based upon their strengths and their skills, rather than through special work programmes that may only further exclude them from the rest of the economy and society. Policies should also include the encouragement and facilitation of self-employment by people living in extreme poverty. For this to be effective, there must be a genuine consultation with people living in poverty in order to identify and address the particular challenges they face in this regard.

(c) The very poor require specifically targeted efforts to include them in employment policies, although many programmes continue to target only the most employable participants. In order to reverse this trend, the most excluded should be prioritized and supported in such a way that is tailored to their specific needs. The international community and all countries should regularly evaluate the impact of overall employment policies and economic growth from the perspective of the lives of the most excluded and the promotion of social cohesion.